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In College Groves

and other

Oxford Verses.

H. A. MORRAH.

Maud B. Alden.

1903.



IN COLLEGE GROVES

AND

OTHER VERSES.



IN

COLLEGE GROVES

And other Oxford Verses: chiefly reprinted from the OXFORD MAGAZINE.

BY

H. A. MORRAH.

"The generations pass, as they have passed,
A troop of shadows moving with the sun."

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ADAM 31



THE greater number of the verses in this volume have appeared during the past two years and a half in the *Oxford Magazine:* and I desire here to express my gratitude for the permission which has been accorded me to reprint them. I have also to acknowledge a similar courtesy, with respect to certain verses at the end of the book, from the Editors of the *Cambridge Review.*

H. A. M.

St. John's College,
Oxford.
November, 1893.



TO

ISAAC GREGORY SMITH,

M.A., LL.D.,

Formerly Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford;
Hon. Canon of Worcester.

I ASK *you, kindest friend, to take*
This tribute for your kindness' sake,
My thankfulness in simple phrase;
And let these grateful tones awake
The sleeping thoughts of early days.

For while the sun's too dazzling beams
Flood my poor brain, and many dreams
Adown her channels teeming flow:
I tread these groves, and then it seems
I must have known them long ago.

Both you and I were younger then,
And wiser, too, than older men
Who view'd the world with straining eyes.
There was no land beyond our ken,
And none, except ourselves, were wise.

Do you remember still, our plan
For rehabilitating Man,
How Men would smile our hopes away!
The years have sped since we began,
And we have smiled, as well as they.

Those happy times, illuming still
The daily work we must fulfil,
Our beacon-pyres have ever been,
Lighting the points of hill and hill
And even the vale that lies between.

Happy, because they still inspire
Your hand to take her subject lyre
And mine to sweep an echoing string,
Till, glowing with the self-same fire,
Your lips and mine together sing.

Therefore a dream it is not all,
When fancies on my soul that fall
The season of my days belie;
One life is ours: one Mother's call
Evokes from us a like reply:

One home hath claim'd our love, and we
Have but one thought in all we see;
One will to make our purpose one;
And one strong hope to keep us free
When we must face the sinking sun.



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IN COLLEGE GROVES.



IN COLLEGE GROVES.

I.—ST. JOHN'S.

I.

A LITTLE while, a very little while
The right is mine through these dear groves to stray ;
But, having known them thus, their tender smile,
Their friendly light, will touch my life-long way,
Bright as this sunshine gilds the lawn to-day.

A little while; and even now I see
From moon to moon each gradual change appear,
With jealous eyes I notice carefully,
Moving apace, the brilliant to the sere,
Spring, summer, autumn, and the fall of the year.

And when a shadow falls upon my soul,
The death-like phantom of a wasted hour,
And fingers point me to the distant goal
That should be nearer; while the shadows roll
Here in these silent groves from flower to flower:

My youthful blood is warmer than before,
For still in heaven there shines one single star
Both day and night for me, upon the store
And fountain of my life, and covers o'er
Honours that might have been, with hopes that are.

II.

For here my trust in earth-found treasure, here
All my fond loves have framed and nurtured been;
And, though I leave them soon, I need not fear
Forgetfulness of this familiar scene,
This earthly Paradise of grey and green;



This royal front and ancient house of grace
 Graved on my brain in every curve and line,
No stern assault of Time can aye efface;
 And this last window, where the creepers twine,
 Is dearer than the rest, for it is mine.

Mine for a season only, since for me
 The thought is not here in these groves to dwell;
Others may long their proud possessors be,
Others, who shall have won them worthily,
 But never can have loved them half so well.

III.

Enough for me that I have learn'd to know
 This glorious garden-ground, and yet may roam
A little longer, where the varied glow
Of many blossoms planted high and low
 Lights up the land that I have call'd my home;

Enough, enough: and soon to turn with pain
But still with hope, from groves untouch'd by care,
Thinking some day to tread this path again;
As one who leaves some house serenely fair,
And trusts awhile to be remember'd there.

II.—NEW COLLEGE.

TO O. N.

I.—The Question.

FRIEND, if a man could hear your organ peal
 From this old window, one whose lot is cast
Deep in the mould of labour, and could feel
 New from the blazing sun and scathing blast
 Aught of the love that sanctifies the past:

I think the shock of those God-given powers
 Sudden and solemn thrilling through his brain
Would fill his heart with higher aims than ours,
 And he beneath these crumbling stones attain
 The wish and will to live his life again.

But we, with dubious morals on our lips,
 And scornful smiles for every youthful whim,
Who would not stay the merciless eclipse
 That makes the glory of a planet dim,
 Have kept our way without a thought of him.

We have our virtues: if it were not so
 This lofty pile were long ago decay'd,
Nor would these garlands thus divinely glow
 That fringe the mantles of descending shade
 And deck the sober earth before they fade:

But if in playing our appointed part
 We fail to take the measure of our pride,
That splendid force wrung from the Founder's heart
 Long years ago, is shaken and denied,
 And but the names of ancient laws abide.

II.—The Answer.

The Founder sleeps: no dreams disturb his rest.
 His mute companions praying at his feet[a]
Bear the same hope to God which east and west
 Long generations bore: that here the seat
 Of truth might stand, and grace and knowledge meet.

[a] In the chantry at Winchester.

All prayers are heard; and if a thousand fears
 And doubts arise; if all our sages cry
Because the footsteps of the fleeting years
 Beat change too slowly, whilst their pulses die;
 There still remains the guiding force on high.

"O let us keep our cloisters free from change!"
 "O call true freedom from the ancient days!"
Who gives the answer? In the endless range
 Of chance, what choice will best direct our ways?
 Let us be silent: seek, in prayer and praise,

The light, the truth, the faith, until the end:
 Leave all vex'd questions; life is scarce begun;
Knowing that here in light the Virtues bend[b]
 Their gaze upon us, lest a day should run
 To its last hour, and good remain undone.

[b] Referring to the famous window in New College Chapel.

Then there shall be more kindness, less delight
In setting riddles for poor souls to guess:
More earnest battles for strong arms to fight:
More sense, more common honesty, and less
Of that coarse scorn men take for cleverness.

III.—MAGDALEN.

I.

NOT once, but often, by this favour'd stream
Whence on the land perpetual pleasures smile
Flooding with light each ivy-column'd aisle,
My soul hath rais'd the palace of her dream.

Jasper, and pearl, and purple amethyst
Shine from the walls: the floor is paved with gold:
The ceiling, gemm'd and jewell'd, doth unfold
A dazzling space the sun hath lately kist.

Here Time can take occasion to delay,
Within these walls his step is seen sedate,
For man's goodwill it seems his pride to wait
And rest awhile upon his hasty way.

To these fair halls what chosen joys belong!
What untold pleasures from her gardens spring!
What high desires when men arise to sing
At dawn of day the Eucharistic song!

II.

Come, while the world is asleep,
Rise, ere the day is begun;
Once again greeting the sun;
'Tis a love-tryst that you keep!
Come, while the world is asleep!

See, in the blushes of day,
Hear, in the lays of the birds,
Happiness higher than words,
Hope, higher far than decay,
See, in the blushes of day!

Listen, a thanksgiving song
Comes, as the morning appears;
Light grow the burdens of years;
Tender, and joyful, and strong,
Listen, a thanksgiving song!

III.

My palace fades, as castles built of air
 Are shatter'd by the lightest passing breeze;
 The hymn dies down to silence thro' the trees;
And still I wander in a garden fair.

Fortune is full of kindness. Men complain
 Of her rebuffs: but here she hath combin'd
 The joys of body and the joys of mind
Against the sternest discipline of pain.

Many will rise, in days to come, and bless
 The hours through which she shone upon them here;
 Some, whom the greater world hath reckon'd dear;
Many, whose lives gave cause for thankfulness;

Many whom ne'er the eyes of wisdom knew
 For worth or courage, or desired to see
 High in the world's esteem, as those must be
Who draw new hopes within the common view.

IV

And now the air is tuneful with the sound
Of voices calling, "Onward! dream no more;
Naught cares the world for this fantastic lore;
Onward!" And I must go: for these have found

The zest of life in action. Be it so!
These have their dreams, and thus bring back the light
Of early days to their supernal sight:
Their work is done, but mine remains to do.

Still when the dews rise mistily, or fall
Unseen upon the meadows, I may ken
Among the busy ways of storm-tried men
Their daily presence; ay, and sometimes call

That palace built long since in Magdalen groves
From the dim distance into life again.
For here is truth, if any truths remain:
The soul must find, or die, the things it loves.

IV.—WORCESTER.

I.

DEEM it not all presumptuous, if I praise
 Worcester, thy name, and honour, and delight,
Mindful of him, thy son, who loved to raise[e]
The burden of his memorable days,
 And sing the glories of thy "terraced height":

Since with a friend's and not a stranger's pace
 I wander here beneath thy trees which shine
In mirrors where their branches interlace;
And linger yet a little while, to trace
 The chequer'd life and story that is thine.

II.

Now strange monastic shadows, grown more cold
 Than desolate winter-darkness, rise to fill
Thy heart and home, and fearful I behold
As in a glass their ghostly arms enfold
 Thyself and thine within embraces chill.

[e] The late Dean Burgon of Chichester.

But now the clouds are lifting, and a call—
A sudden call to arms hath pierced the gloom:
Rise thou to meet it, lest a heavier pall
Descend, dear Worcester, on thy glades, and fall
Thy name unhonour'd to its unknown doom!

III.

'Tis well; decline and honour pass the gate
Close on each other's steps, and hasten on
Along the mazy pathways, then to wait
Until at last the high behest of Fate
Command the one or other to be gone.

And when a single unsubstantial breath
Divides the bournes of splendour and distress,
There strive together strength of life and death;
But Fate the word of love awakening saith,
And there is room for hope and happiness.

IV.

So to recall old struggles it is well;
Though pains of battle long forgotten lie,
Batter'd the walls of every citadel
Point to the perils which of old befell,
Lest men forget how easily they die.

And here, because the voices of the dead
Yield many a message with a tender tone,
Keep, Worcester, on the pleasant path they tread
Still for thy sons the lamp of wisdom fed,
And they shall dare to face the world alone.

V.—BALLIOL.

October 2nd, 1893.

I.

THE same, yet not the same. Since yesternight
One leaf is fall'n from yonder sunlit bough,
Lies 'mongst the rest the ruddiest still, and now
Hath caught in death hues of undying light.

There was due music to its timely fall;
The sound of heav'nly anthems, and the strain
Of notes not all imperfect, whilst again
One grand chorale echoed through the hall.

And men could hear, as tho' strong voices sang
"Now thank we all our God": and learn to know
How truly in the ages long ago
This world of earth at first to order sprang.

Then, with the moving of diviner breath,
 Hear a new gospel on an angel's wing
 Break through the golden silences, and bring
The broader day of unrestricted faith.

II.

Dear Master! yours the power to teach, to spread
 Light from the heart of love-enkindled fires;
 Yours the supreme devotion, that inspires
Life from the ashes of the holy dead.

All thanks to you! for dismal were the days:
 Zeal undiscover'd, patience all a-cold,
 Love little credited; but you were bold:
And now the world grows weary in your praise.

The old, old story! Take the lesson home,
 Ye that are cramp'd and bound in narrow spheres;
 God's world is wider than your hopes and fears;
Hither no harm in life or death can come.

But they whose lives are tuned to chords that chime
With all things good unceasing harmonies
Have sighted first that favour'd land, which lies
Between the farthest gulfs of time and time.

III.

And here, whilst daily voices ring to prayer
And the high roof answers the frequent song,
And still at dark'ning eventide the long
Call of forethoughtful birds hath caught the air:

Here thro' the constant change of work and rest,
Where, duly guided by his master-hand,
So many hearts have help'd to bind the band
That knits in one the zones of East and West:

Be yours the aim in earnest wise to make
All generous works firm-rooted and secure,
All noble plans half-fashion'd, to endure
'Gainst storm and tempest, for the Master's sake.



Set high in sight the claims of brotherhood;
The right of thought in things both great and small;
Learning, and learning's praise; but first of all
The name and fame and knowledge of the good.

FRONDES ACADEMI.



A CHALLENGE FROM ATHENS.

[*Vide* a letter from Sir E. Monson, then Her Majesty's representative in the Greek Capital, to the *Times*, Jan. 28, 1891 (a few weeks after the famous Head Masters' conference), on the vexed question of the pronunciation of Greek.]

QUAKE with consternation frantic,
Doctors, dons, and deans pedantic!
One prolific,
One terrific
Foe to follies professorial
Comes in arms, the Thunderer shielding,
Weapons all incisive wielding,
Comes, to shock your minds unyielding,
Modest Monson monitorial!

"See," he cries from chair legative,
"Scholars unappreciative
Who, dull-witted,
Have omitted
Half the life from poets' pages:

Note their false and wrong proportions,
Mark their tongues' uncouth contortions,
Mouthing insular abortions
From the lips of peerless sages!"

O traducers of position,
Foes to ancient erudition,
Men erratic,
How emphatic
Is the truth that you are spurning!
'Tis no shame, though men of letters,
Here and there to ape your betters,
Therefore, loose your self-wrought fetters;
Ev'ry lane must have a turning.

Do ye not, ye tutors, mutter,
When incipient charges stutter?
Words sarcastic,
Measures drastic
Frame ye not for men that mumble?
Do ye not, when dim and hazy
Quantities obscure and crazy
Loom through some construction mazy,
Liberally groan and grumble?

Do ye not, with sigh and shudder,
Shun the man that talks of "Budder"
(Meaning Buddha)
As you would a
Nasty dose of paregoric?
His offence is over-rated;
Yours is not one whit abated;
He has never claim'd nor stated
An omniscience historic.

Stay, ye learnèd, and in staying
Know the danger of delaying;
Stir your action
To retraction,
Scotch and kill your aberration;
Or announce, in terms laconic,
Telegraphic, telephonic,—
Dons and doctors deferential
To Head Masters consequential:
"*English-Greek* is not essential;
We withdraw the Obligation!"

TO LADY RADNOR.

[On the occasion of her visit to Oxford, with her ladies' orchestra, for the performance of "King John" by the O.U.D.S.]

LADY, ere your music dies,
And its echo, fainting, faileth,
While those thrilling harmonies
To renew, it yet availeth;
Ere relentless Time, the thorn
To our rose of Life's enjoyment,
You and yours afar have borne,
Us recall'd to stern employment:

Take our thanks! although they be
Framed in terms unsatisfying,
Since the tools of courtesy
Practice we have none in plying;
Thanks unworthy,—we in vain
Soar to themes of exaltation;
How could otherwise a plain
Prose-entrammell'd generation?

In the polish'd golden days,
 Days of dalliance and pleasure,
Men would set their grateful phrase
 To some quaint melodious measure;
Gallants would themselves forswear,
 Bold with oaths of classic savour,
Did they know, from ladies fair
 So remarkable a favour!

Speak we though of days agone,
 This too stolid age forgetting;
Is it wonder, thinking on
 Such a play, in such a setting?
Gad, by Alma Mater's name
 Ev'n our lukewarm hearts are burning,
Gratitude hath fann'd the flame,
Thus our lips our thanks acclaim:
 "Speed the day of your returning!"

ODE COMMEMORATIVE OF A RECENT APPOINTMENT.

[(Three years and a half) after the Laureate.]

I.

SIXTY times the winter snows have fallen
(One and sixty times, to speak precisely),
Since, my lord, you were matriculated.

II.

Roundell, premier Lord of Selborne,
Noted for brilliant distinctions
Rare indeed in our annals;
Winner of numerous prizes,
Mark'd with Oxonian approval,
Ratified by the great world;
Come, and receive with our blessing
All the regalia of Stewardship.

III.

Nothing of the arduous or the awkward,
Nothing of th' irrelevant or irksome:
All is sober, slow, somnolent sinecure.

IV.

You then, Heads of Houses,
You then, newly gown'd fledglings,
Meet all at midnight at Carfax;
Send up the scintillating firework,
Spare not your caps, nor your voices,
Throw them promiscuously skyward,
Diff'rences drown and misgivings,
Drinking with zest to his Stewardship!

V.

All his distinctions and his honours
But fulfil his youth's best hope and promise:
They're the *Natural History of Selborne!*

VI.

You, Lord Selborne, the learnèd,
You, the Hymn-book Compiler,

You that have added much lustre
In days gone by, to the Woolsack:
You, good Carnarvon's good successor
Hailing, as he did, from Hampshire;
Lend your kind ear to our welcome:
Read it, 'twill cheer you at Blackmoor:
Con it, and know that our greeting
Is "Length of days to your Stewardship!"

* * * * *

VII.

Are there shadows on the life of Oxford?
Have some mortals bid farewell to sunshine?
Stay! though present hours be fraught with sorrow,
And though the elements forewarn disruption,
We yet shall see, if we but welcome Selborne,
Once more "the light of other days" around us

NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, AND WEST.

(After R.K.)

OH I have been North and I have been South
and the East hath seen me pass,
And the West hath pillow'd me on her breast
that is circled round with brass,
And the World hath laugh'd at me and I have
laugh'd at the World alone
With a loud hee-haw till my hard-work'd jaw is
stiff as a dead man's bone.

Oh I have been up and I have been down and
over the sounding sea,
And the wild birds cried as they dropp'd and
died at the terrible sight of me;
For my head was crown'd with a star and bound
with the fire of utmost hell,
And I made my song with a brazen tongue, and
a more than fiendish yell.

"O curse you all for the sake of men that have
lived and died for spite,
And be doubly curst for the dark ye make where
there ought to be but light;
And thrice be curst by the deadly spell of a
woman's lasting hate;
And drop you down to the mouth of hell who
would climb to the Golden Gate!"

And the world grew green and grim and grey at
the horrible noise I made,
And held up its hands in a pious way when I
call'd a spade a spade;
But I cared no whit for the blame of it, and
nothing at all for its praise,
And the whole consign'd with a tranquil mind
to a sempiternal blaze!

* * * * * *

* * * * *



All this have I done and have brought me back
to work at the set of sun,
While I put my seal to the thoughts I feel
in the twilight one by one;
For I speak but sooth in the name of Truth
when I write such things as these;
And the whole I send to a cultured friend, who
is learnèd in Kiplingese!

A SONG OF MONTHS.

SEE, the banners of the morning!
 Hark, acclaim of Chanticleer!
All the world her way adorning,
 Blooms the foremath of the year;
There is music eucharistic
 From the tower of Magdalen,
And the poet, meek but mystic,
 Takes his mild perennial pen.

Takes his pen, no longer fearing
 Bane of any hostile moon,
For the summer is a-nearing,
 May is harbinger of June;
Wherefore nothing heard nor read of
 His aërial flight deters,
Nay, nor any passing dread of
 Lunacy Commissioners.



Chants he then: "*Labuntur menses,*"
Better thus, so Spring be sped!
Better thus, so mortal senses
Be no longer torturèd!
Yet one sigh for January
Must escape, though months divide;
Shall no recollection tarry
Of our last toboggan-slide?

But the sequent days, their rigour
(Thine, O Februarius!)
Chill'd the body, warp'd the figure,
Sear'd the very soul of us;
Days, when merriment of "Johnner"
Wean'd the mind from tragedy,
Togger-days, replete with honour
Not alone for B.N.C.;

Days when good resolves at matin
Warm'd apace, but warm'd to cool;
Weak they were, as passmen's Latin,
Weak as hymeneal rule:

And the weather's strange vagaries
 Chill'd our hearth and household gods,
To a tune whose echo varies
 With the winds of March and "Mods."

April, destitute of glories
 Came, when academic gloom
Mensis et procuratoris
 Veil'd our tributes to the tomb;
Came, the diligent precursor
 Of a "pathless tide of ills,"
When the grim and greedy bursar
 Framed his tortuous battel-bills.

These are past: and now in duty
 (Every month must have her due)
Hymns the poet "May-and-Beauty"
 (Though he sings of nothing new);
Tests his immature conviction—
 "Poets must be up-to-date"—
In his choicest flower-diction,
 Sense alert, and soul elate:



See, the morning banners rosy!
Hark, the royal roundelay!
Haste ye, deftly twine the posy
Dew-besprent, for Queen of May;
Hers the gift, though yours the giving,
Hers the choice, but yours the cheer,—
Light, and love, and all things living,
In the foremath of the year!

PLUS DE POLITIQUE.

(With the usual apologies.)

"The *Oxford Magazine* has no politics."

No politics! I think you 're right,
 And yours the happiest scheme!
Whilst others plot the livelong night,
 You, peace-enthrall'd, shall dream;
You, when the earth absorbs the dew
 And dear Apollo's ray,
Shall your invigorate theme renew:
 "No politics to-day!"

No politics! not even the plans
 Drawn from some doubtful school,
Which neither bolsters up, nor bans
 The projects of Home Rule;
Not only 'gainst decisive fads
 Your dictum stands to stay,
But "Tories none," you cry, "No Rads,"
 "*No* politics to-day!"

I used to think, that here, no doubt
 We should the plague elude
Of the electioneering tout
 And his detested brood;
But in his unregenerate train
 A Tutor leads the way;
Here then is reason for your pain:
 "No politics to-day!"

And then how sad, the disregard
 Of politics for law!
How could they, think ye, deal so hard
 With Mr. Bernard Shaw?
For nothing can, as nothing could,
 The Magdalen rage allay;
They thirst for socialistic blood:
 "No politics to-day!"

"No politics!" the world will spin
 Upon its axis fair,
Though you refrain from screwing in
 Your tedious doctrinaire:

And blest indeed relief will be
From thoughts of "what will pay,"
To those who join your catch and glee:
"No politics to-day!"

So let us talk of Mr. Snow
And of his Broad Church plot,
Of "what-you-call," and "so-and-so"
(Whose names we mention not):
Let 's all the news discuss, and tell
About the great Greek play;
Let 's hope that it may flourish well!
"No politics to-day!"

A REMONSTRANCE.

BOLTED—how strange in these liberal days it is!
 Barr'd—and I find myself left in the lurch!
I, who desire (to my manifest praise it is)
 Merely to enter the 'Varsity Church.
Where is the man who's responsible for it? he
Makes a nice hash of the Dual Authority!

I have a right, not much less than his own, I think,
 Windows, and pulpit, and pillar to scan.
Is it the Vicar though? He not alone, I think,
 Stands in the way of the 'Varsity man.
Whisper it softly, the fact of the matter is—
He has the aid of proctorial batteries!

Dear Mr. Vicar! Revered Mr. Ffoulkes, if you
 Only could know how we long to get in!
We would consider it one of your jokes, if you
 Open'd the portals,—and call'd it a sin.

(Week-day church-going, in sense parenthetical,
Doubtless in your eyes is more than heretical!)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, and other men,
 Blind devotees of the fetter and bar!
Thus to exclude your less eminent brother-men
 Surely is carrying matters too far.
Though for the Golf-ground ye cherish a preference,
Hath not *Newmania* claims on your deference?

So ye deny us? O bloated plutocracy!
 Foster your folly as long as ye may,
Not very long shall an anger'd democracy
 Bear the stiff yoke of your infamous sway.
Soon a loud laugh shall enliven the fall of you:
Vicar, Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, and all of you!

VANITAS VANITATUM.

ECHOES FROM A COLLEGE LIBRARY.

Voces. STRANGER! let the world alone;
Have you heart to leave us?
Some will stay, when you are gone,
Still to gall and grieve us;
Dust, and her neglectful breed:
Dog's-ear, sooth were better meed:
Stranger! *Friend!* relieve us!

Juvenis. Spirits siren-throated,
How ye counsel ruth!
Here, in castle moated,
Life would pine, and Youth.
I must rather, by the trial
Of determined self-denial,
Scale the steep of Truth:

Antiquated treasure
And forgotten lore
In my hours of leisure
I will ponder o'er;
Then our aims shall be united
Till the eyes of men have sighted
Lands unknown before.

Therefore, no delaying,
For I must be gone;
"Hasten," she is saying
Whom I dote upon;
Hearts of men attract the motion
Of all feminine devotion,—
Hearts,—*and ye have none!*

Nay, I dare not linger
Longer, for I see
Plain the beckoning finger
Of the Time to be;
Yea, the World, while *ye* grow older,
And in dust and darkness moulder,
Feels the need of *me!*

Voces. Friend, from some unfathom'd well
Strange conceits you borrow:
We, alas! can truly tell
You but dredge for sorrow:
Leave the World, for Learning's sake;
Dreaming else, you must awake
To a mirthless morrow!

For, indeed, your words are vain,
Your ideas erratic;
Muddle-tongue and scatter-brain,
Dullard, dolt, fanatic!
Shun ambition, love abjure,
Take instead (reward is sure)
Book lore in an attic!

Juvenis. That were consolation
For the world, goodwot!
Hope is life's salvation;
Tell me, is it not?
Is not then your weary yearning
For this sacrificial learning
But a selfish plot?

Voces. Go your way! too well we know
Youth can never alter.
Wait awhile, till hope die low,
Beauty fade and falter;
Till your precious love, indeed,
And enthusiasm, lead
To the grave, or halter!

Juvenis. Now I know your meaning.
None could ever move
Thoughts so overweening
From their narrow groove:
Cease your conversation rabid.
Tell me, spirits sour and crabbed,
"*Were ye crost in Love?*"

TACENT VOCES: EXPLICIT DIALOGUS.

CHANGE!

"*Wednesday, March 9th. Election of Proctors.*"

NOT yet, though Time is flying, blossoms the vernal larch;
We stand indeed, wind-cross'd, between the Nones and Ides of March;
Nought stable is, nought steadfast, nought keeps an even way,
(For boats that have not yet been bump'd may meet their fate to-day).

And all is changing with the tides, and Term is passing on
Into that past, whither, alas, anterior Terms are gone;
Lies half in light, and half in shade, yon presidential chair,
As on the breeze is borne the breath of some election-scare;

Whilst some discuss, and some propose, and
Heads of Houses scheme,
All men's discomfiture but theirs, the crude con-
genial theme,
Our fashions change; our hobbies change; our
habits change; and so,
Like habits, hobbies, fashions, too, our Proctors
come and go!

So let them meet at B.N.C., and meet in Hert-
ford Hall,
And let them hand to every man the ballot-box
and ball;
Choose duly one from each to wear the well-
worn rabbit-skin,
Then gaily ring the old year out, and ring the
new year in!

Ring out the old! a truce for both, to bench,
and court, and street,
To all the troubles and the joys that they have
had to meet;

May they achieve the right reward of past
proctorial pain,
And Laud and Durham watch above the spirits
of the twain![d]

Ring in the new, and wish for them good luck
and many fees;
May they work hard, as Proctors should, and
scorn the way of ease;
And if they know not how to treat our incon-
siderate youth,
May they consult without delay the Editor of
Truth!

[d] The outgoing Proctors were members of St. John's and University Colleges respectively.

THE SONG OF A PASSIONATE PILGRIM.

["Co-operative parties to Rome and Chicago. Any who wish for further particulars should write to Hartlebury Castle, Kidderminster."—*Advertisement in the* OXFORD MAGAZINE.]

O THE glory and the beauty of prolific concentration!
(Please to listen just a moment while I sing);
O the swiftly coming seasons of vehicular elation!
(I can see them, I can hear them on the wing);
Happy days when every nation, by complete co-operation,
Shall be occupied in constant travelling!

Not the wearisome itinerance of modest little batches,
Though they 're good enough of course to work upon;
Not your Bishop's pious party, with an instrument that matches

Very well the broom of Mrs. Partington;
Nor a scheme that may-be catches here a man,
or boldly snatches
From his happy home some ill-condition'd
don;

But an unrestricted project of dimensions all-
embracing,
With authority that no one shall gainsay,
And a variegated map of many acres, interlacing
All the land that lies 'twixt Oxford and
Cathay;
With a Board to mark the pacing, and to regu-
late the racing
Every year upon an instituted day.

Then the French shall go in thousands for to
hear some man of learning
Read on over-population at Pekin;
They will wander helter-skelter through Bess-
araby, returning

In due time by way of Paris to Berlin;
For with love of knowledge burning, all the world will be discerning
That the Government of Sentiment is in.

And Londoners shall go to see the Irishmen untying
All their legislative knots with Irish skill,
Whilst a horde from Honolulu will be feverishly hieing
To the shrine of Mr. Cook at Ludgate Hill;
Man with man for ever vying in the frequency of flying;
For the cost of transportation will be *nil.*

And if *you* would have a foretaste of our future locomotion
(I think I hear the surging of the foam);
Of the days when all will travel with superlative devotion

And nobody will ever stay at home;
Here's a Cambridge scholar's notion: you shall
go across the ocean,
And 'tis Mr. Haweis waits for you in Rome!

Will he lecture on "Dead Dogma"? you have
only got to buy a
Very reasonable ticket, and you'll see;
Or Mahaffy—in Chicago—"Ἀθηναίων Πολιτεία"—
And it matters very little to the fee;
But it sets my heart afire, as the shadow
draweth nigher
Of the post-historic days that are to be!

O the beauty and the glory of completed con-
centration!
(I think I hear the rustle of a wing);
O the seasons fast approaching to their perfect
destination,

And the added joy to life that they will bring,
In the days when every nation, every rank, and
race, and station,
Shall be occupied in constant travelling!

A BARGAIN WITH BROTHER JONATHAN.

HAVE you heard of the plan of that wonderful man
Brother J., whose proposals so far go?
He has written to sue for the 'Varsity Crew,
Which he wants us to send to Chicago:
And I hear for a fact that his offer is back'd,
In a way that must flatter our vanity,
By an offer of gold that we can't but behold
With the vision of Common Humanity!

In addition he schemes for our eminent teams,
To display in the Land of the Dollar
The way that we come to get into a "scrum,"
And our wonderful art when we "collar";
And he thinks of all this for the ultimate bliss
Of the world, though the casual caviller
Says he offers us pelf for the sake of himself,
Not at all for the sake of the traveller.

Shall we send them to see how they take a degree
Where the nature of all things immense is?
What a wonderful chance for our men to advance
In the learning that comes by the senses!
But we mustn't forget that a value is set
On the treasures that England can generate,
Nor allow *Brother J.* to take heroes away
Without some compensation at any rate!

If we send for a time to that wonderful clime
What we scarcely can spare for a season,
Let us also despatch a promiscuous batch
Of the things that endanger our reason:
Let us send for awhile what is good and what's vile
O'er the azure blue deep where the fishes lie,
That our cousins may see in the Land of the Free
That we manage such matters judiciously!

Then our music shall go: Dr. Parry shall show
That the same of most various styles is,
And we'll send them the row that we always have now
Upon Sabbath-day eve in Saint Giles's;
And to further our love so as clearly to prove
That our action by no means to hurt is meant,
We will send the best part of Ruskinian art,
And our triumphs of vulgar advertisement!

In addition we'll send our most plain-spoken friend—
In a word, Mr. R-b-ns-n S--tt-r,—
But assuredly he must accompanied be
By an average specimen Tutor;
So the Yankees shall find that the cap we've design'd
Will correctly the few and the many fit,
And will readily pay for the pleasures that they
Have prepared for our absolute benefit!

Be it so; there is not any charm in the plot
 As it seems to the natural vision,
And it cannot be said that men mightn't be led
 To regard it with scorn and derision;
I will only observe that most easy to swerve
 From one's way in the dark I have heard it is,
And that treatment of jest is undoubtedly best
 For our eminent brother's absurdities!

A QUESTION OF CRITICISM.

[Dedicated to the *Edinburgh Review:* The Minor Poet: and Mr. Andrew Lang.]

WHEN the splendid fulminations of an undiscover'd sage
In an admirable rage
To illuminate the page
Of a sober periodical foregather'd to engage:
When his pantomimic thunder
Upon poets' heads was spent:
Was it most a thing of wonder
Or a matter for lament?

Like the snapping of a cracker when his innuendoes sprang
On the tender-headed gang
With an unexpected bang,
And disturb'd the nervous system of delightful Mr. Lang:

Was there any mortal failing
Out of kindness to reflect
That the poets are an ailing
And a persecuted sect?

If philosophers arrange an Inquisition of the Schools
Where their nicely temper'd tools
Are administer'd by rules
Made expressly for themselves and only dangerous to fools:
And if then our keenest fencer
In his manner cold but kind
Tortures Mr. Herbert Spencer
For his treatment of the Mind:

Is there any living mortal with a particle of sense
Who 'd be urging in defence
That the subject is immense,
And that logic should be shallow, since the human brain is dense?

Would not rather such a creature
Take a possible delight
In the scene's most likely feature
Of the tortured showing fight?

But the poet must be treated in a very different way:
He is not of common clay!
Far apart from any fray
Let him weave the sentimental and the imitative lay!
Yet one makes interrogation:
Need a critic talk so big
For the simple delectation
Of the literary prig?

A SOLILOQUY.

AT CARFAX.

I.

WHAT means this noise that fills the air,
This rude and ribald sound?
Does some uncouth Professor dare
To venture shyly from his lair
That he may strew Red Ruin where
The City holds its ground?

II.

Nay, let them wreck St. Mary's spire,
And take of spite their fill;
Set the Ashmolean on fire,
Or wreak their despicable ire
On the much decorated quire
Of Keble, if they will:

Let them pursue their festive larks,
Touch old Duke Humphrey up with sparks,
And then make havoc of the Parks,
 Since they must pay the bill:
But oh! by all things fair and free,
By all that is and is to be,
This Sacred City let us see
 A City Sacred still!

III.

If haply these so much despise
 The Buildings of the Town,
That they have cast disdainful eyes
Upon this House that all should prize,
This Home of happy memories,
 Longing to cast it down:
Their frequent debt recall to them,
The mirth and music of Commem.,
And trust to Chivalry to stem
 The actions of the Clown!

IV.

But stay! beside these falling gates
What smiling figure stands?
Is it the Mayor who contemplates
Joyful the Raising of the Rates,
Who would not stay the frowning Fates,
But with a jocund mien awaits
The work of ruthless hands?
Sees the good soul, with thanks for it,
That not henceforth his friends will sit
And talk; but soon, as ghosts, shall flit
Across the scene of civic wit
In aldermanic bands?
Nay: for you hear him chuckle low;
He lets his satisfaction grow,
And chortles horribly, as though
Some frightful and insidious foe
Were captured on his lands:
And hark! His Worship cries, in bliss,
"We shoot as those who cannot miss!
Full soon their pride will fail, I wis!
Fine feathers make fine birds, and this
The City understands!

A WELCOME TO OXFORD.

(COMMEM., 1893.)

ONCE more beneath battlements olden,
 Once more beneath skies that are blue,
Where fairies weave tapestries golden
 And carpets of emerald hue:
Where Youth is companion'd by Laughter,
 Where Life is unburden'd of Care,
And tender love-echoes come after
 The words of the fair;

There comes to our mirth and its measure
 No thought of the hours and their flight,
No method determines our pleasure,
 We reckon no rules of delight:
The sun in the sky is above us,
 His rays in our river lie clear,
So come, and make glad, if you love us,
 The heart of the year!

O welcome! our fairies a table
Shall spread you at twilight and dawn,
Where the summer spreads amber and sable
In sunshine and shade on the lawn:
O welcome, to walk unreprovèd
Where life knows no fetter nor chain,
O welcome, thrice welcome, belovèd,
And welcome again!



VACATION SONGS.



MOSEL-LIED.

(Brodenbach-an-der-Mosel, 1892.)

A SONG, a song! the day is fit for singing set to laughter,
And be so strong the voice of it, Time must come quavering after,
And be so true our notes upborne in melody and measure
As to make new, for night or morn, the ancient tale of pleasure!

Who would not sing, so far away from business and bluster?
Eke might a king join in the lay where these vine-tendrils cluster,
Where hills sun-drest have touch'd with fire the cold, the cross, the weary,
And scorch'd to rest man's dull desire for psalm and Miserere!

BETTY.

I.

BETTY, when the woods up-springing
Lose their silence and their shame,
When the cheery carol-singing
Choir hath set its anthems ringing
Echoes through this earthly frame;
Betty hath my fond allegiance,
Heart, and soul, and mind, and aim.

II.

Betty, now that summer blazes,
Still my song and still my praise is:
Other pleasuring have I none;
When the dew-encircled daisies
Flash like diamonds in the sun,
Still, for my complete allegiance
Betty is the only one!



III.

When the golden year is dying
And the autumn leaves do fall,
When the voice of some one sighing
"Time is flying—Time is flying"
Answers to the lover's call:
Betty hath my fond allegiance;
Betty is the best of all!

IV.

When the frozen runnels glitter,
And the crazy zephyrs litter
Crispèd leaves o'er vale and hill;
When the air is keen, and bitter
Blasts of wind are calling shrill;
Still I hold my fond allegiance,
Only Betty rules me still!

V.

Bring the holly and the roses,
Since she loves them well, and bring
All the wealth the year discloses,
Mellow Autumn's russet posies

And the tend'rest buds of Spring:
All to prove my proud allegiance,
All for Betty's pleasuring!

IDLESSE.

I WANDER'D idly by the sea,
Thinking upon our island story,
With all the uncompleted glory
Of those who strove to keep her free

Till in the flush of English pride
That came upon me, through the roar
Of those strong waves that beat the shore,
I rose above myself, and cried:

'Life of the sea, beyond control—
Whilst waves sweep onward to the main—
Of those that here and there again
Think with strong cords to bind her soul;

'O bear me onward, from the small
And narrow compass of my pride,
And let me hear beyond the tide
Of earth and time that voiceful call,—

'The call that once they heard, who made
Their lives thenceforward more and more
Noble and earnest, till they bore
Honours that could not fail nor fade;

'So hearing fearfully, may I
Rise not less readily than they
To meet the new uncertain day
As those who love to live or die.'

'Enough; what I have said, O sea,
Is but the humming of a shell;
Much unto those that love me well,
An empty murmur unto thee.'



TO F. C. M.

(With a volume of Charles Kingsley's "Scientific Essays.")

HERE is a book for a serious child!
 Here is a treatise for erudite men!
Diction that's elegant, learning that's mild,
 Make their cause common, and give you good
 den;
"Happy returns!" is the message they bring,
"May your young life be perpetual Spring!"

Now you shall study the crust of the Earth,
 Zoölite, oölite, coral, and lime,
Fathom the secret and marvel of birth,
 Painfully tracing the up-trend of Time;
Then in square cap, and with hosen of blue,
Boldly appear to our mystified view!

Thus with my wishes, fraternal and kind,
 Give me to greet you, though late in the day;
Act we as children, too soon shall we find
 What is the ultimate end of our play;
What tho' Dame Science be frowning the while?
Life is still nought, but a tear and a smile!



RHAPSODY.

(*NEW STYLE.*)

HERE in the rays of the sun and the various
light of the flowers,
Reckon no longer for me the swift flight of the
petulant hours;
Paint me no contrasts in shadow, of sunshine
and storm;
Time in this place has no murderer's deeds to
perform,
Time is the slave of the songs of the birds, and the
birds make their songs thro' the showers.

Bring me a posy and garland wash'd sweet by
the rainfall at noon,
Teach me the meaning of scent, and of colour
that vanisheth soon;

If so you will, you may show me the vaporous
nature of youth,
I am no craven, to turn me from death and the
truth,
Mine is a heart can retain all the glamour and
passion of June.

More, for the glamour and passion, their pain
and their pleasure are mine,
Mine they have been since I drank in the
sorrows of roses and wine,
Mine they remain though I fathom the laborous
deep.
Mortal, immortal, all secrets are mine, or to
give, or to keep :
All save the secret of sleep, and the secret of
sleep is divine.



CELIA.

(A name in my Birthday Book.)

WE met. How, where, and was it long ago?
Have I forgotten? May-be yes—and yet
Much though I misremember, still I know
We met.

Mine are the memories of days gone by;
I drink again with greedy lips the air
Of sweet *Waldmeister* and the *Schnapps* that I
Can't bear.

I hear again dear *Mutter Mosel's* flow
Under the *Trauben* while the shadows fall;
I hear the noise of many things, and "blow"
Them all;

For Celia's voice is not those sounds among,
No Celia comes to light my heavy load,
It is not Celia's form that goes along
The road;

She is nor here nor there: only a name!
All else, her face and fashion, I forget;
But still my mind's whole burden is the same:
"We met."

We met, we parted. Let the might-have-been
Some graven stone against that parting set,
Some little stone to keep its memory green,
Mark'd with these words, two sever'd lines between,—
"We met."



'O SING AGAIN.'

O SING again your spinning-song,
And let me turn the page,
For at your summons clear and strong
Comes back the golden age.

The blanchèd face of dreadful Death
Seems through the dark to smile,
And sleeping knights take back the breath
That they had lost awhile.

With bounteous fare the halls are stored,
And all the rafters ring,
When honour'd guests for bed and board
The splendid nobles bring.

Here maids and matrons rise, and move
Through tangle-blossoming bowers,
Who fashion in their narrow grove
A statelier life than ours.

But through the music of the throng
That treads my Fancy's stage,
I know it is your spinning-song
That brings the golden age.



AT CLOSE OF DAY.



DUM SPIRO SPERO.

WHILE yet the light which God once gave
 Doth (but a little) linger,
And Time the measure of my grave
 Takes with his lean forefinger;
While in the tender rose-and-grey
 The moments sink and shorten,
My youthful hopes are ta'en away
 As hostages to Fortune.

For, I had thought, Life, at its best,
 Thrill'd ev'ry living creature
With boundless hope and deathless zest
 For the work and play of Nature:
I saw her pleasure in the task
 Of making all things riper;
I watch'd the dance: but did not ask,
 "*Who is it pays the piper?*"

But now, alas! the truth is plain
(Since one has put the query)
That all the world makes mirth in vain
When all the world is weary;
No profit is in music play'd,
In eyes' delighted glancing,
When ev'ry merry man and maid
Is tired to death of dancing.

Enough; some hand upon the sky
The stars again hath shaken.
I 'll leave of Life the how-and-why,
And think I was mistaken.
But give me back, to-morrow morn,
The season fresh and vernal,
And grant my early faith, new-born,
To prove itself eternal!



THE AULD SHEPHERD TO HIS DOG.

(After R. B.)

AYE, callant, while there's licht athwart
 Yon gay expanse an' meadow,
Nae doot afflicts thy leesome heart,
 Thy sonsie face nae shadow;
Reck naethin' then, for fleetin' years
 Oor friendship canna wither,
Sae lang we tread, wi' smiles, wi' tears,
 The gang o' life thegither!

It wasna thine, auld friend, to bask,
 Lang syne i' ways sae sunny,
Yet still thou 'll welcome ilka task
 Wi' looks baith brave and bonny;
Sae true thou 's gi'en thine answering smile,
 I 'd ca' thee amaist human,
Yet ne'er, as thou, sae free fra' guile
 Was ony man, or woman!

Thou wi' fause airts o' warldly pomp
 Hast had nae kin' o' dealin',
For Nature's chiel maun frisk an' romp
 Wi' friends o' fellow-feelin';
Sae thou an' I shall ance reca'
 Beneath these skies o' azure,
Past times and seasons vanish'd a',
 O' pride and proper pleasure!

How wad we hail, of auld, the day,
 An' revel in its glory,
But now my haffet-locks are grey
 An' thine are amaist hoary;
An' gin, my callant, I should last
 These pleasant days o' simmer,
I dauna think the winter's blast
 Wad spare my agèd timmer!

Weel, I maun gang, an' gang fu' sune;
 Sae wad I dee—fu' gaily;
Life should be like that piper's tune
 Wha skirls his quantum freely:



To them wha rest o' cheerful min'
 Guid hope o' peace is given;
Nae groanin', moanin' son o' sin
 Unbars the gate o' heaven!

An' shall I leave thee, friend, to mourn
 An' make a friend o' sorrow?
Nay: for thou 'll hae me to return
 An' hopefu' wait the morrow:
I 'll ask nae wealth o' carven stanes,
 Nae gravin', nae adornin',
Gin thou 'll be watchin' o'er my banes
 Till ding o' doomsday mornin'!

ΑΝΔΡΩΝ ΑΝΑΚΤΙ.

We heard you speak; we felt the thrill
That holds us all in bondage still
To you as chief of men to-day:
We heard and sigh'd, as who should say,
"Yet men are mortal, work and will;"
Because we thought it vain to scan
The measure of the perfect man.

We heard you call the ancient days
To life; and as you trod the ways
Of honour with a pace sedate,
Showing the throne where Wisdom sate
Surrounded by a golden haze;
And when you clear'd the doubtful shame
That clouds an unforgotten name;
And when you bade us reverence yet
The saying on our portals set
That we should keep it evermore;



We gave you thanks ; but still we bore
Within our hearts a secret fear
For all we honour and revere.

O it is well that we are bound
In bonds and trammels ; compass'd round
With bands that we shall never break !
Else were we tempted much to make
Man and the shade of man's renown
Of perfect life our aim and crown ;
Aye, and at last deserve the rod
Of the all-righteous wrath of God.

LUX IN TENEBRIS.

I.

WHEN the sun darts his rays upon the earth
 Suddenly thro' the gloom of darkening days,
And one broad gleam of light betrays the girth
 Of life we thought half-stifled in the haze:

Then, standing at the parting of those ways
 That seem to lead unequal paths along,
Let us relax awhile our anxious gaze
 And turn to meet the Future with a song.

II.

So let us climb to that far eminence
 High from the world, where men have never
 stood,
Far on a boundless sea beholding thence
 Argosies burdenèd with all things good:



And while their pennons glitter in the flood,
Their sails reflecting glory from the sky,
Let us re-echo in our hardihood
The burden of their distant harmony.

III.

"Fortune shall shower her flattering honours down
Lavishly on us, and the years in store
Give to Renown in hand, till we the crown
Achieve that none have e'er achiev'd before!"

O let the world despise their wisdom's lore!
This honest laugh 's a more inspiring strain
Than theirs, who peeping thro' yon half-closed door
Turn back with jeers to face their friends again.

IN MEMORIAM

EDWARD HAROLD BROWNE, D.D.,

BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.[*]

Obiit 1891.

(TO THE MOURNERS.)

O YOU that loved him, you that spread
For one so gentle and so brave
Comfort at eventide, and fed
Still with fresh oil the light he gave;
Who lent his footsteps strength to tread
Gladly the pathway to the grave:

For you that mourn, for you that weep,
Here is the secret of his peace:
There is no death. O let the deep
Low murmur of your mourning cease,
And hear the song that through his sleep
Speaks of redemption and release:

[*] The Bishop of Winchester is Visitor of five Oxford Colleges: New College, Magdalen, Corpus, Trinity, and St. John's.

"How blest the life of mortal man,
His death how far removed from tears,
When hopes, that shrinking Youth began
To consecrate with doubts and fears,
Rise up fulfill'd, to light the span
Of all his children's coming years!

"O dearly loved, to guide your view
Beyond this earth's uncertain line
Across the vast of old and new,
How clear above all laurels shine
Over the cypress and the yew
The fierce pure fires of life divine!

"Beyond the pale of human ill,
How high beyond all blessing blest,
Who learn serenely to fulfil
God's merciful and high behest:
Far from the cries of wanton will
The silent peace of perfect rest!"

IN MEMORIAM

J. K. S.

(February, 1892.)

How chill the breath, how cold the long lament—
"Promise new-born, new-shrouded in the grave;
In vain, in vain the midnight oil was spent;
Too frail life's bark on time's storm-beaten wave."

And we who wove for him the laurel crown,
A poet's garland, had forecast the time
When he should lay his jester's bauble down
And rise above the littleness of rhyme;

"He should achieve," we said, "what they achieve
Who lead the busy forum of the world,



Teaching the thoughtless what they should
believe,
Bearing aloft the flag of truth, unfurl'd:"—

And then pale Death silenced the silvern tongue,
And now we mourn a spirit wayward, strong.
"*Alas!*" we cry, "*Whom the gods love die*
young:
Whom the gods love are not remember'd long!"

SUNSET.

Lo, the strong sun in his celestial state
 Hath wrapt this earth in wonderful array,
And the pale leaves, at sweet Saint Mary's gate
 Flash back the glory of departing day:
 Hope speaks to Hope the word, and seems to say
"Watch thou, and work, and pray; it groweth late."

"It groweth late." The message comes to all
 Borne on the pinions of the unknown air;
Some heed, because their loss were others' gall,
 And some ignore, whose counsel is despair;
 Then unto Love Love whispers: "Wilt thou dare
This bane and spoil? Beware; the shadows fall."



The shadows fall ; and many, year by year,
Seek fame and fortune by the fading light ;
If they but count the cost, the way lies clear,
Patience and labour scale the furthest height :
"Keep well the goal," saith Life, "the bourne, in sight,
Soon fall the shades of night ; and death is near."

"It groweth late :" yonder, the sinking sun
Smiles on the porch he slowly crimsoneth
Before he sets ; and so the earth moves on
Silent and patient, to decay and death.
"And yet not all," cries Youth, "is waste of breath ;
"Only too soon," he saith, "the day is done!"

THE END.

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